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SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (MENNUTI) AND AF/S;
DEPT ALSO PASS USAID AFR/SA - DMENDELSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR DR. J. FRAZER, MR. J, O'NEILL;
HHS FOR SECRETARY THOMPSON

E.O. 12958 N/A

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SUBJECT: COMBATING AIDS IN MOZAMBIQUE - REQUEST FOR
FUNDING FOR CATHOLIC NGO RETROVIRAL PROGRAM

SUMMARY

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1. (U) ROME'S SANT'EGIDIO COMMUNITY, A VATICAN-ENDORSED LAY CATHOLIC NGO WITH GLOBAL REACH, WHICH SUCCESSFULLY MEDIATED AN END TO MOZAMBIQUE'S CIVIL WAR IN 1991, HAS LAUNCHED AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAM TO COMBAT HIV/AIDS IN MOZAMBIQUE. SANT'EGIDIO, WHICH HAS RETAINED ITS COMMITMENT TO MOZAMBIQUE'S DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT, REGARDS HIV/AIDS AS THE BIGGEST THREAT TO MOZAMBIQUE'S FUTURE AND HAS LAUNCHED A DRUG RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT AGAINST AIDS (DREAM) PROJECT IN MOZAMBIQUE TO PROVIDE HIGHLY ACTIVE ANTI-RETROVIRAL TREATMENT TO PREGNANT WOMEN AND LACTATING MOTHERS. WITH ADEQUATE FUNDING, IT INTENDS TO EXPAND THE PROGRAM TO OTHER KEY AT-RISK SECTORS IN THE COUNTRY. A 12-MONTH CLINICAL TRIAL HAS PROVEN HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL, REDUCING TRANSMISSION RATES BY UP TO 40 PERCENT AND SAVING THOUSANDS OF NEWBORNS FROM HIV INFECTION. THE DREAM PROJECT HAS ALREADY SECURED SUPPORT FROM MULTINATIONAL DRUG COMPANIES, AND MOZAMBIQUE'S MINISTER OF HEALTH, FRANCISCO SOGNANE EXTOLLED THE BENEFITS OF THE SANT'EGIDIO PROJECT FOR MOZAMBIQUE'S PEOPLE AND URGED THAT IT BE ENLARGED TO ENCOMPASS A GREATER NUMBER OF PEOPLE INFECTED WITH HIV/AIDS. ADDITIONAL FUNDING WILL ALLOW THE PROJECT TO BE EXPANDED THROUGHOUT MOZAMBIQUE, AND POTENTIALLY BEYOND. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT DREAM FITS LIKE A GLOVE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S INTERNATIONAL MOTHER AND CHILD HIV PREVENTION INITIATIVE AND RECOMMENDS THAT THE WHITE HOUSE, USAID, AND EMBASSY MAPUTO WORK WITH SANT'EGIDIO TO EXPAND THIS PROMISING PROJECT ADMINISTERED BY A GROUP WITH A PROVEN TRACK RECORD. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

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SANT'EGIDIO: AFTER PEACE, TAKES AIM AT HIV/AIDS

2. (U) THE SANT'EGIDIO COMMUNITY, A VATICAN-APPROVED LAY MOVEMENT -- NOT LIMITED TO CATHOLICS -- WITH MORE THAN 40,000 MEMBERS DEDICATED TO CHARITY, HUMANITARIAN, AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION EFFORTS IN MORE THAN 60 COUNTRIES, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN MEDIATING AN END TO MOZAMBIQUE'S DEVASTATING CIVIL WAR IN 1991. THE COMMUNITY'S COMMITMENT TO MOZAMBIQUE HAS NOT ABATED SINCE THEN, AND IT IS NOW ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN ENSURING THAT THE HARD-WON PEACE LEADS TO BETTER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS FOR THE PEOPLE OF MOZAMBIQUE. TODAY, SANT'EGIDIO RECOGNIZES THAT THE INCREASINGLY HIGH INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS IN MOZAMBIQUE IS NOW THE BIGGEST THREAT TO THE NATION'S FUTURE, DESTROYING FAMILIES AND UNDERMINING ECONOMIC PROGRESS. AS A RESULT, ANDREA RICCARDI, THE KINETIC FOUNDER AND HEAD OF THE COMMUNITY HAS DEVELOPED AN INITIATIVE TOGETHER WITH THE SIZEABLE SANT'EGIDIO COMMUNITY IN MOZAMBIQUE AIMED AT REVERSING THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS THROUGH ANTI-RETROVIRAL TREATMENTS.

3. (U) ACCORDING TO SANT'EGIDIO, THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA HAS BEEN BASED PREDOMINANTLY ON PREVENTING MORE AFRICANS FROM CONTRACTING THE VIRUS. SANT'EGIDIO BELIEVES THIS HAS NOT WORKED, EVEN WHILE THEY SUPPORT CONTINUED EFFORTS AT EDUCATION AND PREVENTION. THEY POINT OUT THAT NO EPIDEMIC HAS BEEN OVERCOME BY PREVENTION ALONE. MOREOVER, THEY BELIEVE THE LACK OF ACCESS TO TREATMENT SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVENTION, AS PEOPLE FEAR BEING TESTED AND FOUND TO BE POSITIVE BECAUSE

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OF RESULTING SOCIAL ISOLATION AND PHYSICAL SANCTIONS.

DREAM: TREATMENT THAT WORKS

4. (U) SANT'EGIDIO'S DRUG RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT AGAINST AIDS

IN MOZAMBIQUE (DREAM) PROJECT IS OFFERING ACCESSIBLE TREATMENT TO PEOPLE WITH HIV/AIDS, BEGINNING WITH PREGNANT AND LACTATING MOTHERS. ANTI-RETROVIRAL DRUGS ARE ADMINISTERED TO PREGNANT WOMEN TO SAVE BOTH MOTHER AND CHILD, THEREBY PREVENTING A MOTHER'S OTHER CHILDREN FROM BECOMING ORPHANS. CONDUCTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND VOLUNTEERS, AND WITH EXISTING HEALTH DEPARTMENT FACILITIES AND STAFF, DREAM USES HIGHLY ACTIVE ANTI-RETROVIRAL THERAPY (HAART) TO PREVENT VERTICAL (MOTHER-FETUS) TRANSMISSION OF THE HIV VIRUS. TREATMENT IS OFFERED FREE OF CHARGE.

15. (U) THE PROJECT HAS FIVE COMPONENTS:

A) EXPANDING ACCESS FOR TREATMENT THE MODEL FORESEES TWO

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	EVG-00	CIAE-00
	INL-00	USNW-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	UTED-00	VC-00
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	VCE-00	NSAE-00	OES-00	DHS-00
	PA-00	SS-00	TEST-00	ECA-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-01
	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W				

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R 090532Z APR 03
FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
INFO WHITEHOUSE WASHDC
HHS WASHDC
EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

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POSSIBILITIES FOR ACCESSING TREATMENT FOR PERSONS WITH
HIV/AIDS: ONE THROUGH A DAY HOSPITAL FOR PEOPLE IN
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RELATIVELY GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION, AND HOME CARE FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN AN ADVANCED STAGE OF THE DISEASE. PARTICULAR ATTENTION WILL ALSO BE GIVEN TO PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE SUCH AS HEALTH CARE WORKERS AND TEACHERS WHO ARE KEY TO MOZAMBIQUE'S DEVELOPMENT. HOSPITAL AND DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE WILL ALSO PROVIDE COUNSELING, TESTING, TREATMENT OF OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTIONS AND STDs, NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION AND FOOD AID.

B) PREVENTING VERTICAL TRANSMISSION: DREAM FORESEES THAT MOTHERS INFECTED WITH HIV RECEIVE HAART TO PREVENT VERTICAL TRANSMISSION. AFTER GIVING BIRTH THE THERAPY CONTINUES TO PREVENT INFECTION BY BREAST-FEEDING.

C) TRAINING: DREAM WILL BE STAFFED BY MOZAMBICANS, WHICH REQUIRES INVESTMENT IN LOCAL AND OVERSEAS TRAINING FOR ALL PERSONNEL INVOLVED, A WELL AS A PROGRAM OF SUPERVISION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING.

D) LABORATORY: TREATING HIV POSITIVE PEOPLE WITH HAART DEMANDS ADVANCED DIAGNOSTIC SUPPORT AND MONITORING OF ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS. DREAM HAS ALREADY SET UP THE FIRST TWO MOLECULAR BIOLOGY LABS IN THE SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY (MAPUTO) AND IN THE CENTER AT BEIRA. A SIMILAR LAB IS PRESENTLY BEING EQUIPPED AT NAMPULA IN THE NORTH OF MOZAMBIQUE.

E) INFORMATION NETWORK: ALL DREAM ACTIVITIES ARE MONITORED THROUGH AN IT NETWORK LINKING THE TREATMENT CENTERS AND LABS.

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FIRST RESULTS PROMISING

16. (U) THE FIRST RESULTS OF DREAM WERE PRESENTED AT THE TENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RETROVIRUS AND OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTIONS HELD IN BOSTON IN FEBRUARY. FOUR-

HUNDRED FORTY HIV POSITIVE PATIENTS, PRIMARILY PREGNANT WOMEN, PARTICIPATED IN THE INITIAL DREAM PROGRAM IN ORDER TO GAUGE THE EFFECTS OF THERAPY ON MOTHER-FETAL TRANSMISSION. OF THESE, 240 FOLLOWED THE STANDARD THERAPY USED IN WESTERN COUNTRIES. MORTALITY RATES WERE LOWERED; THE QUALITY OF THE PATIENTS' LIFE IMPROVED MARKEDLY, AND THE AMOUNT OF THE VIRUS IN THE BLOOD DECREASED NOTICEABLY. ABOVE ALL, THE PROGRAM REVEALED A HIGH CONTINUING PARTICIPATION RATE -- A POINT OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY LIKE MOZAMBIQUE. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT EVEN IN NATIONS WITH A BASIC HEALTH SYSTEM IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE A THERAPEUTIC MODEL THAT IMPACTS SIGNIFICANTLY ON THE RATE OF HIV INFECTION. THE RESULTS OF THE DREAM TRIAL ARE TO BE PUBLISHED IN AN UP-COMING EDITION OF THE PRESTIGIOUS BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL LANCET. CLINICAL RESULTS OF THE TRIAL ARE AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET: WWW.RETROCONFERENCE.ORG/2003/ABSTRACT/WORDHTM L/2127.HTM

17. (U) THE SANT'EGIDIO COMMUNITY FURTHER ELABORATED THESE RESULTS AND PRESENTED ITS PROJECT AT A RECENT GATHERING IN ROME ATTENDED BY EMBASSY OFFICERS. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE DREAM PROJECT HAS ALREADY EARNED THE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT OF A VARIED GROUP OF ENTITIES RANGING FROM MULTINATIONAL DRUG COMPANIES TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GERMANY. MOZAMBIQUE'S MINISTER OF HEALTH, FRANCISCO SOGNANE,
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EXTOLLED THE BENEFITS OF THE SANT'EGIDIO PROJECT FOR MOZAMBIQUE'S PEOPLE, AND URGED THAT IT BE EXTENDED RAPIDLY TO ENCOMPASS A GREATER NUMBER OF PEOPLE INFECTED WITH HIV/AIDS.

DREAM AND USG OBJECTIVES

18. (U) DREAM FITS LIKE A GLOVE WITH THE PRESIDENT'S INTERNATIONAL MOTHER AND CHILD HIV PREVENTION INITIATIVE FOCUSED ON INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF PREVENTIVE CARE, INCLUDING DRUG TREATMENTS, AND BUILDING HEALTHCARE DELIVERY SYSTEMS TO REACH AS MANY WOMEN AS POSSIBLE WITH THE CARE THEY NEED. IN FACT, AFTER DCM SHARED THE PRESIDENT'S JANUARY ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS NEW HIV/AIDS INITIATIVE WITH SANT'EGIDIO, ONE OF ITS SENIOR OFFICIALS SAID HE FELT AS IF THE PRESIDENT WAS READING FROM THEIR PROPOSAL BECAUSE OF THE COMMON FOCUS ON ANTI-RETROVIRAL DRUGS, MOZAMBIQUE, PREVENTING MOTH-CHILD TRANSMISSION, AND PRESERVING FAMILY UNITS. THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT STATED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS LOOKING TO WORK WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS,

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	EVG-00	CIAE-00
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	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/001W				

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PRIVATE GROUPS AND "ALL KINDS OF FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS INVOLVED ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT."

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19. (U) EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE HARD TO FIND A FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE WITH BETTER PROSPECTS THAN THE SANT'EGIDIO DREAM PROJECT. WE NOTE THAT THE COMMUNITY OF SANT'EGIDIO, FOUNDED IN ROME IN 1968, IS VATICAN-ENDORSED CATHOLIC LAY

MOVEMENT WITH MORE THAN 40,000 MEMBERS (NOT ALL CATHOLIC) DEDICATED TO CHARITY AND HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN MORE THAN 60 COUNTRIES. THE COMMUNITIES ARE COMMITTED TO SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR AND SUFFERING INCLUDING PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY DISABLED, HOMELESS, FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS, PEOPLE WITH HIV/AIDS, TERMINALLY ILL PEOPLE, PRISONERS, ELDERLY, ROMA AND SINTI, AND REFUGEES. IT IS ALSO A LEADING FORCE FOR ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE AS A WAY TO PROMOTE PEACE AND CO-OPERATION AMONG RELIGIONS, AND TO RESOLVE ARMED CONFLICTS. COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO RESOLVING THE CONFLICTS IN MOZAMBIQUE AND GUATEMALA, AND HAVE HELPED MEDIANE PEACE EFFORTS IN AFRICA'S GREAT LAKES REGION AND KOSOVO. EMBASSY VATICAN HAS PREVIOUSLY FUNDED A SANT'EGIDIO PROJECT IN KOSOVO THAT SEEKS TO RECONCILE SERBS AND ETHNIC ALBANIANS AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL. WE MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH SANT'EGIDIO ON A BROAD RANGE OF AFRICAN ISSUES, AND THEY CONSULT REGULARLY WITH SENIOR USG OFFICIALS.

ACTION REQUEST

110. (U) EMBASSY VATICAN STRONGLY ENDORSES THE SANT'EGIDIO DREAM PROJECT, WHICH DCM PASSED TO USAID MOZAMBIQUE DESK OFFICER FOR FUNDING CONSIDERATION IN FEBRUARY. IN LIGHT OF
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THE PRESIDENT'S NEW INITIATIVE WITH ITS FOCUS ON MOZAMBIQUE AND THE ANTI-RETROVIRAL TREATMENTS BEING IMPLEMENTED THROUGH THE PROGRAM, WE BELIEVE THIS OFFERS AN IDEAL PROGRAM FOR FUTURE USG FUNDING. SANT'EGIDIO HAS TOLD US THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY CHARTED AN AMBITIOUS EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM, WHICH IS LIMITED ONLY BY THE LEVEL OF FUNDING. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH WASHINGTON AGENCIES AND EMBASSY MAPUTO TO HELP FUND THIS PROMISING PROJECT, WHICH CAN SAVE THOUSANDS OF NEWBORNS FROM HIV INFECTION, KEEP FAMILIES INTACT, AND REDUCE POVERTY.

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